

## IMPROVING ACCESS TO MUSEUM SERVICES IN QUEENSLAND

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For more than 20 years, the State-supported Queensland Museum has recognized its obligation to improve state-wide access to its services. It has decentralised its facilities, collections and expertise through development of branches. This will continue to expand through a range of outreach activities that includes direct and extension education services, specimen and kit loans, travelling exhibitions, and support for local museums including staff training, attachment of professional staff and administration of a project funding grants scheme.

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Queensland is the second largest Australian state, with an area of 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup>. Its population of more than two million people is broadly decentralised but is generally concentrated along the eastern coastline and along three, major inland rail and road accesses running from the State capital, Brisbane and from Rockhampton and Townsville. More than 47% of Queensland's population lives in Brisbane and environs. Fifteen other centres have populations about 10,000 or more. Brisbane, in the southeast corner, is 1750 km from Cairns in the north and over 2000 km from Camooweal in the northwest, but less than 100 km from the well populated Northern Rivers district of New South Wales.

Museum services in Queensland are provided through a variety of publicly and privately operated institutions. The largest of these, the Queensland Museum, was established in 1862. It covered natural sciences until 1970, when it was given the mandate to include the pure and applied sciences, history and technology. Operation of the Queensland Museum is defined by the *Queensland Museum Act 1970-1989* and *Queensland Museum By-laws 1986* and is largely financed from state revenue.

The Queensland Museum was redeveloped in an 18,000 m<sup>2</sup> Queensland Cultural Centre building which opened to the public in October, 1986. The Centre also includes the Queensland Art Gallery, the State Library of Queensland and the Queensland Performing Arts Trust as semi-autonomous statutory authorities and each is governed by specific legislation. The Centre is vested in The Queensland Cultural Centre Trust, which has responsibility for building maintenance, operation of common facilities and

provision of common services. Directors of constituent institutions form a majority of the Cultural Centre Trust. Each member body has State-wide obligations which each addresses differently.

This paper defines the Queensland Museum's approaches to provision of services and support away from its main facilities in Brisbane. This approach includes the following strategies:

- . developing Branch museums
- . improving community access
- . promoting outreach projects through
  - .. direct education
  - .. travelling exhibitions
  - .. loan services
- . supporting local museums
- . providing training for regional personnel
- . appointing professional staff for local museums

### DEVELOPING BRANCH MUSEUMS

The Museum's Act includes:

"25. Branches. (1) The Board either alone or by agreement and in conjunction with any other person or body may establish, maintain and control branches of the Museum within Queensland.

(2) An agreement between the Board and any other person or body shall not be entered into for the purposes of this section unless the Governor in Council has first approved of the terms of the proposed agreement."

This provision is an effective tool in establishing permanent bases away from the main Museum.



FIG. 1. "Woodworks" Branch, Gympie, the main reception and display building.

Planning, in 1970, for the Bicentennial celebrations to commemorate the discovery of the east coast of Australia by Captain James Cook included the suggestion that a display train might be developed to tour the State.

A display train had been used in connection with the 150 year celebrations of Queensland's Statchood in 1959 and a similar suggestion for 1970 was a serious suggestion for the program. Unfortunately, a fully costed analysis showed that the tour would not be cost effective in a State as decentralised as Queensland, especially when hire and conversion of carriages, charges for use of locomotives, salaries and travelling allowances for accompanying teaching/maintenance staff and display design and construction costs were taken into account. It was intended to stop at centres with a population of 1,000 or more for a few days in each. It would have taken more than a year to travel once over major State rail routes. Facilities at railway stations were frequently inadequate to serve the needs of the exhibition or of large numbers of visitors.

Expenditure on such an enterprise, if adopted as a permanent feature of decentralised Museum services after the Cook Bicentennial year, would have been about the same as for a later alternative suggestion for permanent display and other facilities to be developed in regional centres every three or four years. Given some centralised

support, it was expected that such facilities would generate income to offset most maintenance and running costs. This proposal did not eventuate and further consideration of regional museum facilities did not occur until well into the 1970s.

The Board of Trustees, established by the Act in 1970, considered that Branches should be either general or specialised thematic facilities. Such classification blurred as the number of Branches increased and has been abandoned.

The Board recognised the importance of the inland rail and road routes emanating from Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville and the major national and international tourist destination centred on Cairns. Accordingly, the Board set out to convince the Government of the advantages of expanding services to regional Queensland by improving the situation of the main museum in Brisbane and by progressive development of Branches in Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns. Proposals for Rockhampton and Townsville each included exhibition, education, collection storage and research facilities, while that for Cairns centred on display and educational aspects.

The established Tertiary educational institutions in Townsville and Rockhampton influenced these proposals. Universities and the then Colleges of Advanced Education not only



create the collections that might form the basis for continuing regional research projects and attendant storage requirements but would obviate the establishment of expensive libraries and laboratories. They would also provide the opportunity for academic interchange to satisfy the professional development needs of branch staff.

#### "WOODWORKS" BRANCH, GYMPIE (Fig. 1)

In the early 1980's the Forestry Department sought the Museum's assistance to establish a permanent display of Forestry activities and the timber industry that incorporated varied uses of timber and timber products. The Branch was established 3 km north of Gympie, 166 km from Brisbane, on the northern coastal highway.

The Branch was established on the basis of an agreement and administrative arrangements that shared responsibility for the facility. The Forestry Department provided the land, the building, including the landscaping and the staff, initially attached personnel and later permanent Manager, administrative assistant and other support staff. The Queensland Museum incorporated and maintained the Forestry collection, produced the displays and audiovisuals, provided a legislative base, gave access to the Museum's Trust Fund to accommodate income, grant and sponsorship monies and appointed additional temporary staff.

The Branch was opened in March, 1984, with the name, "WoodWorks", chosen through a schools' competition to define an appropriate title. It has been expanded subsequently by the addition of a blacksmith's shop and a functional steam sawmill and now comprises 1000m<sup>2</sup> of public display space. Further expansion is planned to include an administrative and sales area, a woodturner/cabinetmaker shop, an extension to the area devoted to transport of timber and a storage building.

The Board established a Management Committee to be responsible to the Board in the first instance and Forestry for day to day running of the Branch and for policy, planning, support funding, exhibits and programs, to the extent of delegations defined by the Board. Committee membership reflects community (especially Local Government), Forestry and Museum interests.

A feature of the public program at "WoodWorks" has been the demonstrations on aspects of the timber industry. Retired timber workers

living in Gympie operate a variety of hand tools and other equipment, including the steam driven sawmill, for organised groups and on special occasions. A more extensive range of Forestry skills is demonstrated on "open" days and such days have attracted more than 8,000 visitors. Branch visitor numbers (excluding open days) totalled 12,677 in 1989/90. A minimal entrance fee is levied and income received is applied to the Branch programs. Entrance on the first Monday each month is free to all visitors.

#### MUSEUM OF TROPICAL QUEENSLAND, TOWNSVILLE

Developed in Townsville, this second Branch was initially the North Queensland Branch. A community group entitled the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland Association Inc. had proposed the creation of a major joint project involving Government at State and Commonwealth levels and private enterprise to develop an important tourist and public educational facility in Townsville. This development, initially to include a world-quality aquarium, an Omnimax theatre and commercial shop and office tenancies, was expanded at the suggestion of the Association to invite the Queensland Museum to include a Branch. Total funding of \$6M for the non-commercial elements was provided jointly by the Commonwealth and State Governments as part of Australia's 1988 Bicentennial celebrations.

The Queensland Museum Board commissioned a feasibility study through a Cairns-based consultancy group to ascertain the most appropriate location for the Museum's initial northern Branch; this study recommended Townsville. Not only was Townsville the largest population centre with a more diversified commercial base, but it also contained the James Cook University of North Queensland, the headquarters of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and had the Australian Institute for Marine Sciences in close proximity.

The Great Barrier Reef Wonderland Association offered \$1M towards the Branch establishment costs. This did not cover the total proposed building, and a two stage development was suggested to the Queensland Government, the first to be built and opened with the rest of the Great Barrier Reef Wonderland and the second stage, of approximately the same size, to be completed in the mid-1990's. The GBRW Committee raised an additional \$1M from local industry and the public. This was directed



FIG. 2. "Museum of Tropical Queensland" Branch, Townsville, facade of the building from Flinders Street, showing the reconstruction of *Muttaburrasaurus*.

towards completion of the exhibitions in the Aquarium. A shortfall of \$124,000 in the fitout budget for the initial Branch component was met by the State Department of Works which, in addition, contributed expert advice on design and construction.

Because of the complexity of the relationships involved in the Wonderland, the Board insisted on control over title for the land upon which the Branch had been built. This was excised from the overall parcel of land used for the total development, property which was controlled by the Townsville Harbour Board, later the Townsville Port Authority. It was then vested in the Museum Board as Trustees for a new Reserve for Museum Purposes. The site is close to the commercial centre of the city on the bank of Ross Creek. It is also close to the Breakwater Casino and ferry terminals for access to Magnetic Island and Barrier Reef cruises.

The Board believed that the Branch should firstly serve the local population and that in achieving that end it would also serve tourists to the region. The latter were seen as critical in providing income to cover operating expenses. Initial exhibitions were a mixture of traditional systematic zoological, geological, anthropological and applied arts subjects, together with an

ecological display of the Townsville Common and another on North Queensland rainforest. Also present was an audiovisually-based presentation on historic shipwrecks in the vicinity and display of the ship's tank in which the final chapter of the tragic Mrs Watson story was enacted in the late 1800's, after her escape from an Aboriginal attack on Lizard Island.

Stage one included 880 m<sup>2</sup>, approximately half of which was devoted to collection storage, research and other staff facilities. All exhibitions were designed and produced in Brisbane, although the Branch now produces small, temporary exhibitions of local interest and others that supplement school holiday programs. Visitor numbers have grown steadily to 60,000 in 1989/90. A modest entry fee was introduced at the time of opening and, to encourage repeated use of the Branch by local residents, entrance to the facilities on the first Monday each month is free.

At its opening in June, 1987, the building was staffed by a Curator, a Curatorial Officer, an Administrative Assistant and three Museum Attendants. This staff establishment was later supplemented by temporary appointments of Board officers, as opposed to Public Servants, and there has been wide community support through ap-



pointment of honorary staff, broadening the expertise available. Further staffing has come from research and other grants and through secondments, especially from the Queensland Department of Education.

A Management Committee was established by the Board and given delegated authority for the day to day operations of the Branch. This Committee has representation of the local business and academic community and of the Museum. The Committee has successfully introduced in-house and extension educational services and gained access to funds through local foundations and businesses. It has developed the brief for the second stage of the Branch and promoted accountability for the operation through Corporate Planning and associated performance indicators. The Branch has attracted an extremely significant collection of modern corals from assembled by AIMS as the basis for its reference collections and has growing marine invertebrate and vertebrate spirit collections. The staff, both permanent and honorary are publishing significant research results.

The display space had been designed to enable rotation of displays from the main Museum to Branches with a minimum of modification. One of the most popular exhibitions in Brisbane, on dinosaurs, marine reptiles and other fossils from marine Cretaceous rocks inland from Townsville was transferred to the Branch in 1989. A model of the Queensland dinosaur, *Muttaborrasaurus*, was erected in the garden at the branch (Fig. 2). A joint ticketing arrangement with the Aquarium and Omnimax components of the Wonderland is part of a centralised marketing strategy for the whole complex; the attraction is promoted widely both locally and interstate by the central agency and by member bodies.

#### COBB AND CO. BRANCH, TOOWOOMBA (Fig. 3)

Following the death of Mr. W.R.F. Bolton, the owner of the transport company Cobb and Co., his family was attempting to place his major collection of horse-drawn vehicles and associated items, including two original Cobb and Co. coaches, with an organisation that would maintain them in perpetuity. Following protracted negotiations, during which time ownership of the collection was transferred to another family owner, Banks Pty. Ltd., the Cobb and Co. collection was donated to the Queensland Museum under the name of the "Cobb and Co. Collection of W.R.F. Bolton". In

accepting the donation the Board undertook to use its best endeavours to house the collection in the eastern Darling Downs area, the region from which much of it had been drawn.

The collection had narrowly escaped destruction by fire while in its original location and the Board was assisted by the Toowoomba City Council, which provided temporary accommodation in a Council store until leased storage could be organised in Toowoomba. At this time, the Toowoomba Showgrounds were relocated from a central city site to the city outskirts. The original showgrounds reverted to Government use earmarked for extension of the Toowoomba Technical and Further Education College. On this site the existing Floriculture Pavilion, constructed in cement block, was remodelled to become the Cobb and Co Branch. The Department of Works extended it at a cost of \$775,000 to include secure outdoor display space, a blacksmith shop, a woodwork shop, toilets and a paved car parking area. The Building was given an architectural appearance (colonial) in keeping with its proposed usage. The land was subsequently designated as a Reserve for Museum Purposes and placed under the Trusteeship of the Board.

The Board provided permanent staff of a Curator and Curatorial Officer. Six casual staff, appointed since, are an Administrative Assistant and five part-time Interpretation Officers.

At its opening in December, 1987 all major elements of the Cobb and Co. Collection were accommodated and several horse-drawn vehicles were added from the Museum in Brisbane. Interpretive exhibitions and audiovisuals were developed in Brisbane. The Branch has a small lecture/meeting room, a sales area and lounge and an administrative area. The Branch occupies 1570m<sup>2</sup> of covered space, most of which is environmentally controlled.

This Branch was originally regarded as a specialist facility. It has become evident that the Branch must provide broader programs if it is to continue attracting local visitors as well as tourists. A vigorous, in-house, educational program ensures a continuing value to different student age groups and avoids the "once only" visit approach from local schools. This is of paramount importance considering that Toowoomba is an educational centre. Further, the Curator has ensured involvement in a wide range of heritage events to advertise the Branch. School holiday activities assist in diversifying the subject matter covered and through a com-



FIG. 3. "Cobb and Co." Branch, Toowoomba, front entrance with an operating replica coach as a temporary attraction.

bination of such approaches the Branch enjoys an increasing patronage to 15,977 in 1989/90.

Research at the Branch concentrates on the transport industry; the historical account of the coaching company, Cobb and Co., in Queensland, has been a significant and popular achievement (Tranter, 1990). The Board established a Management Committee, to represent the Museum and the local community and delegated to it responsibility for day to day operation of the Branch.

The Cobb and Co. Branch will need to expand in the future if it is to fully satisfy all of its potential as a community and tourist resource. Discussions have been initiated with the adjacent TAFE Council to determine ways in which the objectives of both organisations can be achieved on the available sites.

#### COOMERA BRANCH

In 1985, the Government enacted legislation to transfer, to the Board, responsibility for "Queensland Transport and Technology Centre" which became the Queensland Museum Coomera Branch. This was a museum-type development that had been partially implemented on a site on the main highway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

The site comprises a reserve for museum purposes of 33ha that includes two brick residences and an airstrip that could be used for light aviation purposes. It had been the intent of the Board of the previous body to have the airstrip used on open days for demonstrations of various aircraft, particularly vintage types. Apart from primary landscaping, some fencing and signage, little else had been achieved. Responsibility for repayment of a significant loan made by the Board of the Queensland Transport and Technology Centre was transferred to the Queensland Museum Board, with repayment fully supported by the Government. The Board has seen this Branch as an opportunity to develop facilities for display of industrial technology and other topics that cannot be covered adequately in the main Museum.

No public function is currently conducted at the Branch and an independent study suggested that financially viable operation of display and other public functions could only occur at Coomera when there is a sufficiently large population base nearby to promote use of the Branch by regular as opposed to tourist patronage. The major tourist attraction, "Dreamworld", directly across the highway means that, for the Branch to compete, the development must



itself open as a significant and completed attraction. It is unlikely that the Board will fully develop the Branch until the late 1990's at the earliest.

In the meantime, the Board established a storage facility for items of heavy technology in the form of a 945m<sup>2</sup> building, built by the Department of Works, at a cost of \$798,600, and opened in June, 1989. Both existing residences are leased and one of these is occupied by a tenant who, for a reduction in the rental, provides on-site supervision. Costs are minimal and are generally restricted to mowing, minor maintenance and services to the storage building.

An unoccupied storage building at the old main Museum site in Gregory Terrace, Brisbane is earmarked for relocation to Coomera by 1993. This structure when in place will add a further 350m<sup>2</sup> of good quality storage space to the site.

#### SCIENCENTRE. BRISBANE

Early in 1989, a report by the Institution of Engineers Australia (Queensland Branch) identified that declining interest in the pursuit of science and mathematics subjects at high school and in engineering and science courses at Tertiary level could be redressed, in part, by establishment of a science centre. At the time, no firm proposals were made as to how such a facility might be developed or run.

The Museum's design policy since 1985 had been to incorporate interactive displays wherever possible. This approach recognised the need to include such new display techniques because inflexibility of traditional museums had resulted in establishment of new competitor institutions elsewhere in the world. The idea that the Queensland Museum might take up the recommendation of the professional body and foster a science centre as a Branch was in accord with the institution's mandate.

The Board was made aware that, as part of the Government's program to restore many of its fine old buildings in the centre of Brisbane, the original Government Printery, was to be available for reuse after renovation; the Government Printing Office having been relocated to a new, industrially designed building. Discussions had taken place with the Government Printer and, with the approval of Cabinet, the building was earmarked for occupancy by a Branch featuring communications, especially the printing industry. The Board was convinced that a science centre had greater ramifications for the future

economic well-being of the State and, for that reason presented the case to Government that the "Old Printery" should become an interim home for the State's science centre.

Containing only 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of space, approximately 800 m<sup>2</sup> of which could be used for interactive displays, it was obvious that the "Old Printery" would not be a permanent long-term solution for the science centre needs of a State the size of Queensland. It could, however, serve the immediate function of establishing a facility that would begin to address the problems identified by the Institution of Engineers Australia (Queensland Branch) and give a breathing space to allow for assessment and planning for the longer term.

Restoration of the "Old Printery" was undertaken by the Department of Works to extremely high standards. The three story structure was modified to accommodate air conditioning plant, a passenger/goods lift and improved fire escape capacity. Loading bay and official parking facilities were provided through basement access as part of adjacent Government work. Total expenditure on the building amounted to \$2.1M.

The challenge for the Museum designers was to merge a very upmarket function like interactive science into a heritage building. The budget for displays was only \$120,000. Because of an extremely short lead time, the Museum had to reduce its involvement in production and purchased a limited number of standard treatments from other science centres. It also engaged outside display consultants to produce some units. Most of the 80 or more interactives in the opening exhibition were designed and produced in the main Museum's workshops. They were executed using open, metal support structures so that visitors could see that there was no "black box" involved in the presentation. Maintenance has proven to be only a fraction of that expected from experience elsewhere.

The Branch opened in October, 1989 as the "Sciencentre". The Department of Education provided a senior science teacher on secondment to develop the educational exhibition components. A full-time position for a Curator/Manager was established shortly afterwards and filled by the seconded officer. Two Museum Attendants were attached to the Branch from the main Museum and an Administrative Assistant, a Technician, three Interpretation Officers and two Shop Assistants were added; funding comes from the entry charge. The Department of Education continued its support by providing



FIG. 4. "Sciencentre" Branch, Brisbane, showing a school group using the interactive "slippery air".

another seconded Teacher to assist with the use of the Branch by educational groups.

An Advisory Committee was established under the Chairmanship of the Vice-Chairman of the Board, with membership drawn from a wide spectrum of community interests. The Advisory Committee was to investigate medium and long term needs of the Sciencentre and advise the Board on how to ensure that the Branch would continue to meet the requirements of the community. It undertook to achieve this within 15 months of its inception.

Shortly after opening, the Advisory Committee became aware of the Government's desire to find a use for the much larger George Street printing building, adjacent to the "Old Printery", that had been occupied by the Sciencentre. Following extensive negotiations, the Government decided that the Branch would be relocated to the Printery as soon as its heritage building restoration was completed. An allocation of \$4.5M has been committed by the Government towards this restoration work. It was estimated by the Committee that more than \$500,000 should be sought from industry and the community for displays in the larger accommodation and for an outreach service to take Sciencentre programs to other parts of the State.

Transfer of functions to the 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> Printery

is expected to begin towards the middle of 1992. More than 58,500 people attended the Branch in the first four months of operation (Fig. 4); an annual attendance in excess of 250,000 is expected in the more spacious building. Success of the Sciencentre has been due in no small measure to the more than 100 trained, volunteer "Explainers" who are rostered to assist visitors interact with the exhibits.

Following submission of its Report, the Advisory Committee was disbanded and replaced by a permanent Management Committee to run the facility.

#### GLENLYON DAM DISPLAY CENTRE, NEAR STANTHORPE

Work had been undertaken by the Museum in the area to be inundated by the Glenlyon Dam, near Stanthorpe, as a project for the Dumaresque-Barwon Border Rivers Commission. A display was established at the dam site in 1976 to interpret the natural history of the area and to display the development models.

In October, 1986, an Agreement was reached with the State Water Resources Commission and approved by the Governor in Council to have the display centre maintained in future as a Branch. Although establishment costs in an existing site



building were estimated at only \$20,000 and, regardless of the fact that the Branch occupies only 80 m<sup>2</sup>, the dam is a popular camping and recreational area. More than 24,600 people visited the Branch in 1989/90. Maintenance of the unmanned facility is minimal and day to day attention is provided by the resident dam staff.

#### LANDS, MAPPING AND SURVEYING BRANCH, BRISBANE

Numerous historical items associated with the exploration and mapping of Queensland accumulated over many years in the Department of Lands, Mapping and Surveying. When that Department transferred to its new building at Woolloongabba, it sought to display its collection for the public, especially school groups. The Surveyor General approached the Museum to consider development of a Branch that would enable the Department to have access to the museum's expertise, Trust Fund provisions and collections and to give permanent collection status to the Department's holdings as part of the State Collection under the care of the Queensland Museum. A formal Agreement was achieved in August, 1988, with the endorsement of the Governor in Council.

The Branch occupies 112 m<sup>2</sup> of high quality, fully air-conditioned space and is manned by a Curator provided by the Department of Lands. A small Advisory Committee drawn from the Department and from the Queensland Museum, supervises Branch operations. Total running expenses are provided through the Department of Lands, with the exception of minor funding through the Museum's Trust Fund. Visitor numbers have been low and in 1989/90, the Branch was viewed by 2,300 persons.

#### LARK QUARRY ENVIRONMENTAL PARK, NEAR WINTON

In August, 1971, a joint field party from the Queensland Museum and the American Museum (Natural History), New York, was shown evidence of dinosaur trackways in the Late Cretaceous Winton Formation, to the south of Winton, central western Queensland. A subsequent Queensland Museum excavation revealed the trackways of a herd of small to medium sized ornithischian dinosaurs, stamped by a large carnosaur.

A complete latex peel was made and the excavated surface was duplicated in fibreglass for display in Brisbane. A small part was lifted as a

permanent scientific record while the remainder of the site became vulnerable to weathering. It was declared an Environmental Park, jointly administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Winton Shire Council and the Queensland Museum. It provides protection for one of the most interesting relics of the "Age of Reptiles" anywhere. The QNPWS protects the site, the Museum provides the scientific interpretation and conservation of the trackways, and the Winton Shire Council provides access and site maintenance.

A steel shelter has been erected by QNPWS and the area is fenced to keep stock and wildlife from using the shelter to the detriment of the trackway surface. Modifications to the structure continue to be made from time to time to overcome problems identified with experience. The Lark Quarry Environmental Park attracts enthusiasts to its remote situation, as evidenced by the several hundred new signatures that are added to the visitor's book each year. The Museum's involvement amounts to at least one trip to the site annually to monitor and remedy deterioration and vandalism.

#### FUTURE BRANCH DEVELOPMENTS

The Queensland Cabinet decided in 1990 that any Government Department that wishes to develop a museum must first discuss the proposal with the Queensland Museum, with a view to making the development a Branch of the Queensland Museum. Also, Departments maintaining collections of objects that wish to dispose of them must now offer them firstly to the Queensland Museum for inclusion in the State's official collections, if appropriate. The first proposal involves the Transport Department wishing to establish a Railway Museum for smaller items of memorabilia in a delightful building at Ipswich. This building, close to the city centre, already houses railways historical archival material, and is separate from the Transport Department's display of large, steam and steam-related rolling stock exhibited at Redbank, half-way between Ipswich and Brisbane, a facility maintained in part by the Railways Historical Society.

Apart from possible branch developments in Rockhampton and Cairns, already mentioned as Board initiatives, there is a possibility that the Government itself might promote further developments in connection with tourism and environmental matters.



FIG. 5. A range of popular Museum publications and other products.

The Board considers that existing Branch infrastructure is providing acceptable levels of service away from the main Museum. It is also aware that its activities through the Branches and the standards it promotes through the quality of its exhibitions, the interpretation of its collections, the integration of its programs with the educational needs of local communities and the research bases it gives in the regions are having a marked influence on encouraging locally organised museums to improve their services.

#### IMPROVING COMMUNITY ACCESS

Although display galleries in Brisbane are only conveniently available to residents of southeastern Queensland, the Museum provides a range of more widely available services. The public outside the southeastern corner of the State, obtains free advice and information from the Museum through correspondence and telephone to the extent of 10,000 units of service each year.

Many enquiries include samples for identification and, in an area of the world where the "age of discovery" is still very much with us, it is not uncommon for the public to participate in finds that are new to science. The frequency of en-

quiries on common subjects at particular times of the year led to a large series of popular Information Leaflets. When it becomes apparent that a large number of incoming enquiries relate to the same topic, a leaflet is developed to merge the authority of the Museum's expertise with the flair of the educator and scientific journalist. Costs are offset by making the same leaflets available to public visiting the Museum, with an honour system at a nominal "donation". Compilations of related groups of leaflets are marketed, especially as project kits and to educators interstate. Income for the service has always far exceeded its costs.

Staff members have also been encouraged to popularise the subject matter of their sections by writing books and booklets and through production of other items that help interpret the Museum's fields of interest (Fig. 5). The majority of such material is published or manufactured through the Museum and is distributed to the public through the Museum's wholesale and retail outlets. The Museum has adopted a number of strategies to increase the reach of these products. For example, a large percentage of sales is achieved through mail orders from country and interstate patrons. This is encouraged by media launches and by use of wide-





Fig. 6. Maori dancers with the Hon. Wayne Goss, M.L.A., Premier of Queensland at the O.T.C. sponsor's night for the international travelling exhibition, "Taonga Maori".

ly distributed catalogues. Run-ons of covers, with ordering details on the reverse are sent to known interest groups and teacher librarians. Some publications are developed to meet specific curriculum needs and may be joint ventured with the educational authorities. In such cases, initial sales can be in excess of 40 000 copies, with the guarantee that the information will be distributed to every primary or secondary school in the State. Specialist publishing to explain the subject matter of Branches is also encouraged. Use of Branches in this way and as additional sales distribution points adds to the range and penetration of Museum publications and products.

The collections of the Museum, whether housed in the main Museum or in Branches, provide an invaluable asset for use by specialists and the general public. Now that collection data are in the institution's computerised data base, access is available without physically visiting the facilities. Commercial or extended enquiry and use of the data base are charged at a realistic rate but reasonable free access is encouraged by the general public.

The Museum undertakes extensive field work projects around the State and every opportunity is taken to have staff involved in such work

interrelate with individuals and groups in the communities visited. Talks to local service clubs are encouraged and, in the case of a particularly impressive excavation of a Cretaceous ichthyosaur in central Queensland, many members of a small town and surrounding area visited the site and had the process explained to them.

Community access is not initiated solely by the Museum. Groups and individuals use the facilities of the main museum and Branches to promote their interests to the community. The Queensland Museum has provided the facilities and assisted in the presentation of specialist lectures and temporary displays, some of the latter occupying in excess of 600m<sup>2</sup> for periods of 2-5 weeks. The topics displayed cover such subjects as industrial design and medical research from local universities; advances in scientific knowledge as a result of current research from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation; historical collections of Queensland militia by individuals, military units and groups; and displays from spinners and weavers, woodcraftsmen and other craft organizations. Outback craft awards were recently presented in the Museum by the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre, which is located in Longreach.

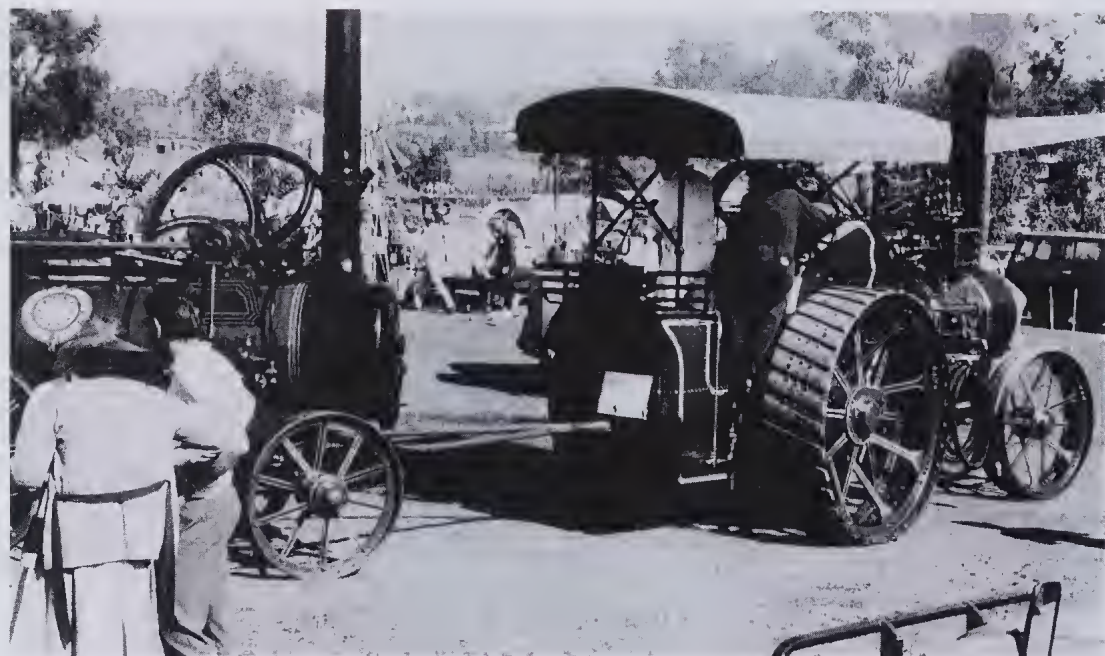


FIG. 7. The Museum's fully restored Garrett steam traction engine and its portable Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies steam engine at an antique machinery show.

Particular groups reflecting Queensland's cultural diversity are encouraged to participate widely in planning and activities that are associated with major travelling and permanent exhibitions. The Museum hosted the exhibition "Ancient Macedonia" and the local Greek community and club co-operated fully to add Greek music, dance, food and wines to the occasion. Similar involvement of the local and New Zealand Maori communities occurred in connection with the cultural experience, "Taonga Maori" (Fig. 6), resulting not only in a better appreciation by the whole community of Maori culture but also increasing access by the Maoris themselves to their Taonga. Aboriginal advice and concurrence was sought and accepted in the presentation of the Museum's major, permanent exhibition on the "Rainforest Aboriginals". The Museum is extending this process by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Advisory Committee to advise the Board on policies relating to all aspects of maintenance, development and use of the State's collections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander anthropological and archaeological items. Several special exhibitions of contemporary Aboriginal Arts and crafts, at which the items displayed were available for purchase by visitors, were

staged to increase awareness of the modern cultural expression of Aboriginal artists and to assist in the commercial development of their works.

Opportunities that presented themselves for the Queensland Museum to increase access to particular parts of its collections have been taken up regularly in such events as antique, operating machinery shows and at the Royal National Association Exhibition, an annual event that runs for 10 days in Brisbane. Items such as a 13 tonne, fully restored steam traction engine (Fig. 7) and smaller operating exhibits such as a hot-air engine have been used widely in both types of event. Until the recent cessation of the historical agricultural display component of the RNA Exhibition, exposure at such events ran to hundreds of thousands of viewers each year. Even the occasion of the relocation of the main Museum to its new building in the Queensland Cultural Centre allowed the institution an opportunity to relocate for several months the biplane, the Avro Baby in which the famous Queensland aviator, Bert Hinkler, made many of his pre-1920 record breaking flights, to his home town of Bundaberg.

It has always been the philosophy of the Museum that the institution exists for the public and that the staff are present to assist the community in the care and interpretation of the



public's collections. Because of this, the Museum was interested in the links and use that could be established through encouragement of the Queensland Museum Association Inc., a society that grew out of an earlier body, the Queensland Hall of Science, Industry and Health Development Committee. The Queensland Museum Association, of over 400 members, provides regular volunteer workers in many areas of the Museum. Honorary workers interact between the institution and the community and extend beyond the members of the Association to include eminent research workers often with grant support, persons with particular interests in field-based projects such as maritime archaeology, work-experience students and display gallery explainers. Altogether, the Museum has more than 250 such honorary staff.

#### DIRECT EDUCATION

The main Museum maintains a range of in-house, well-staffed, educational programs and each Branch is involved in direct programs. Increasingly, direct educational activities in the main Museum concentrate on teaching teachers to maximise effectiveness of their use of the facilities and resources in connection with class visits to the public galleries. Visitors in the younger age groups are specially provided for during school holiday periods in all of the Museum's venues where trained educators are employed.

In the Sciencentre and Cobb and Co., the Curators are trained teachers and are well placed to promote direct educational programs. Even so, the Sciencentre is supported in its educational initiatives by a seconded teacher, which enables the Branch to cater for nine class groups, approximately 270 students each day during school semesters. The Cobb and Co. Branch has a program that enables visiting groups to use the same material for a variety of curriculum purposes for different age groups, this being of paramount importance where repetitive use of the facility is necessary for its financial viability. The Museum of Tropical Queensland appointed an Education Officer using funds made available from the local Gluyas Trust. This enabled the Branch to develop educational group visit procedures and a variety of activities for different age groups.

In all cases, the service and procedures for booking a visit are advertised each semester to all schools, both State and private. Other avenues for promoting the Museum and its Branches and

their educational facilities, such as journals distributed to teachers and schools, are provided with articles for publication and paid advertisements. Every effort is made to ensure that school visits are planned for maximum effectiveness and are no longer a holiday for students and teachers alike. Computerized scheduling of visits ensures that minimal overlap with other groups is likely to occur and that the density of school groups does not spoil visits for members of the public. The Museum caters for 180 000 students each year in its formal educational programs and, of these, nearly 80,000 are served through the Branches.

From 1979, the Museum trialled an education program to take objects and programs to schools in distant and disadvantaged areas. The Department of Education seconded out a teacher, each for a two year term, together with all allowances and travelling expenses, while the Museum provided a light van, specimens and other teaching aids and all running expenses. The program included private and church schools, preschools and kindergardens and even served adult groups in more remote centres. Initially, one unit operated and most visits were made to schools within 300 km of Brisbane; occasional trips were made to the far north, west and northwest. As a result of the outstanding success of the initial trial service in southern Queensland, the Education Department seconded a further teacher to operate out of the main Museum from the end of 1990.

The Museum of Tropical Queensland successfully negotiated a similar service through the Priority Country Area Program with the Northern Regional Office of the Education Department in mid-1990 to serve the Townsville hinterland, together with part-time support of an additional teacher to assist with organisation of the service. Funds to decorate the extension vehicle were given by a local milk company and the highly visible presence of the Branch in isolated communities quickly raised the image of the whole Museum in the region.

Topics covered by the service include dinosaurs, Australian mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, Australian inventiveness, pioneer life, Aboriginal life, what is a museum?, Australian transport, coral reef ecology, rocks and minerals, observation skills, venomous Australians, life cycles, skeletons and many more. The service visited 190 schools in 1989/90 and reached in excess of 25,000 students.

As with in-house education, the extension ser-

vice is widely advertised each semester and is virtually booked out within weeks of notification in the educational literature. Visits are scheduled to accommodate similarity of subject matter requests and clumping of destinations. Extension Officers attempt to return home at least each weekend and to include vehicle servicing and other maintenance into their itinerary. Being members of the State's teaching service, they work to the school timetable, rather than to that of the Museum.

The Museum has recently instituted training courses for teachers to link with curriculum-based booklet production. This was specifically intended to augment a Museum insect activities booklet that had been distributed by the Department of Education to all primary schools. Initially, some 200 teachers attended a two-day training seminar at the main Museum, run on a cost recovery basis. So successful was the experience that a similar program, presented by Curatorial, Education and Display staff, was run from the Cobb and Co. Branch in Toowoomba. Further workshops are now intended to be conducted in other regional centres to coincide with display in those centres of a travelling display on insects.

#### TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

The Museum acknowledges that the public visits museums because they present real objects that are otherwise only seen in publications or on television. Any travelling exhibition that concentrates only on two dimensional reproductions or replicas is unlikely to have the same impact as evinced through access to the Museum's permanent facilities. At the same time, travelling exhibitions of original works of art, especially paintings, are considerably easier to pack, move from venue to venue, install and dismantle than are the more awkward, traditional "museum" displays. The latter frequently involve bulky and fragile display cases as well as the items that are the subject of the exhibition.

The Museum's first attempts at circulating displays in recent times involved a wildlife photography exhibition, contained in a demountable, free-standing, aluminium panel system and financial support from the Arts Council of Australia. The Kern Corporation, which was involved in the construction and operation of major shopping centres in provincial cities, provided space and staff to erect, dismantle and supervise the display. Shopping centres, with

their daily attendance of thousands of customers, proved to be ideal as temporary exhibition venues, especially where material of a non-eritcal nature in regard to security is involved.

More recently, the Museum established a major temporary exhibition in its main gallery spaces in Brisbane that was designed to travel to regional and interstate venues after its Brisbane showing. The exhibition resulted from a curatorial project to conserve and fully catalogue a collection of 126 watercolour paintings of Queensland wildflowers by the renowned artist, Ellis Rowan. A selection of 90 of the paintings became the core of the display, and was presented in the manner of a late 19th century exhibition with an anteroom containing a brief history of the artist, together with some of the zoological collections she had used to add other dimensions to her "in situ" botanical renditions. The paintings were organised in a stacked situation, in keeping with the illustrations of the original presentations of her work.

The majority of the Brisbane presentation went on tour with financial support from the Regional Galleries Association and the Arts Division of the Premier's Department. The exhibition was shown at the well-appointed art galleries at the Gold Coast, Rockhampton and Townsville. The exhibition's interstate tour commenced in early 1991 in Sydney and it will be shown later in the Northern Territory Museum and Art Gallery and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. This exhibition was accompanied by a well illustrated, high quality booklet that covered the experiences of Ellis Rowan in Queensland and all of the Museum's holdings (McKay, 1990), a series of art prints based upon four of the paintings that were fully sponsored by the paper and printing industries, a range of letter cards and a series of post cards.

The most recent intrastate travelling exhibition was the Dodd collection of butterflies and other insects, the material that made the reputation of "the butterfly man of Kuranda". The collection is extremely fragile, comprising thousands of dried and pinned insects in glass-fronted boxes. Transportation was organised by road using air-cushioned art transporters but it was assessed that purchase of an enclosed van that would have been sold at the end of the tour was an option that was almost as cost-effective. Again, the venues chosen were the regional art galleries, these having controlled environments and spaces that can be used much more conveniently than local museums or meeting halls.



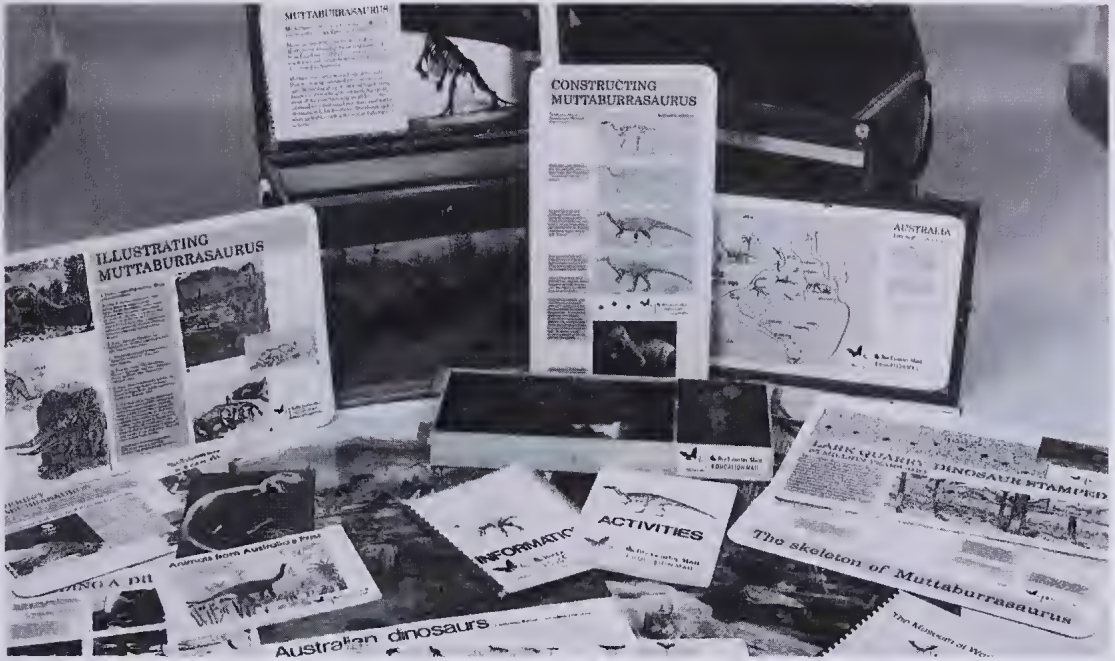


Fig. 8. Queensland Newspapers sponsored loan kit showing the comprehensive range of objects and other material included in the "Australian Dinosaurs" kit.

The Queensland Museum is aware that its current solutions to travelling exhibitions can only serve centres that have sufficiently large population bases to support high quality venues. It is addressing design of units that can be circulated to more widely available situations, such as local libraries or local government facilities. Such units should be capable of changing from transportation to display units and be able to link together to form limited thematic topics as well as stand-alone subjects.

### LOAN SERVICES

Every museum has available a range of specimens that are not suitable for inclusion in the permanent collections for one reason or another. In some instances, such specimens are acquired by donation or collection, while others are relegated through reassessment of existing collections to an educational role. In the mid-1960's, the Queensland Museum began loaning such items, especially to teachers. The service began in the Brisbane area and was required to be collected and returned by hand. These individual specimens joined a small selection of boxed, mounted specimens of reptile, bird and mammal specimens that had been available for

many years and which had been one of the Museum's first extension initiatives.

These specimens greatly extended the outreach services. Certain materials, such as minerals or shells, could be linked to provide greater spread and depth of subject coverage; they could be packaged and sent to any part of the State. Standard, hard cardboard suitcases, fitted with foam plastic sheets cut to contain the particular items, met the key criteria of strength, portability and economy. Some items that did not normally reach the educational collections (e.g., Aboriginal implements) were purchased. Material, such as examples of adaptations for flight, was specifically prepared to augment the loan collection. Volunteers organised and registered into a separate system all the isolated specimens that constitute the bulk of the loan collection.

Original arrangements were amended to reduce the overall cost of maintenance of the service by altering the system of free access to material sent by road or rail transport to have the Museum cover charges associated with outward movement and to require the borrower to meet the return costs. A further modification to the borrowing arrangements resulted from the developing relationship between the Museum

and the Department of Education. Collections of loan items were located in each of the Department's regional offices and access to the material within each region was organised by the regional staff. This obviated the Museum from any requirement to contribute to any part of the distribution beyond the initial location of the loan items to the regional offices.

In 1989, Queensland Newspapers Pty.Ltd. sponsored a comprehensive suite of loan kits that met many more of the curriculum needs of teachers in the more inaccessible parts of Queensland. The three year sponsorship of \$700 per month is matched on a \$ for \$ basis by the Queensland Museum Board. The kits involve a major "diorama" mounted specimen or other key items, together with 35mm slides, specially prepared information cards, Museum booklets and information sheets, hands-on specimens, audio tapes, activities sheets, teacher's notes and other aides (Fig. 8). The package is designed in a wooden crate that is part of the presentation. A fitted cardboard cover provides protection and advertising for the contents, extending the life and public knowledge of the kit.

It is anticipated that more than 30 loan kits will be completed on the sponsorship; as they are completed they are immediately distributed. Kits are rotated from region to region each semester. Queensland Newspapers intend to publish a broadsheet page of educational information, prepared by the Museum, on each topic covered; this will be released through their major daily and its weekly education supplement. Run-ons of the sheets will be used for distribution to students using kits.

In 1989/90, the service reached 118,500 students in 1900 schools and involved 18,485 items and kits on loan.

#### SUPPORTING LOCAL MUSEUMS

Queensland is well served by a wide variety of smaller museums, some of which are privately owned but with the majority, more than 170, operated by societies and other community groups. The number is increasing at a rate of nearly one per month. Some now achieve standards comparable with those of the Queensland Museum. For example, in 1988, the Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre was opened in Longreach. This \$6M display and events centre was funded from Commonwealth and State Bicentennial funds, with a large component donated and subscribed by the Australian

community. Exhibition items were largely provided on loan from the Museum of Australia in Canberra and from the Museum of Victoria in Melbourne. Display work was undertaken by commercial contract.

Most local museums, however, do not aspire to developments of this magnitude. Many are by-products of the activities of small historical societies that acquired collections of items and associated archival documents and photographs. Most grew in an unplanned way and there was overlap in collection coverage from one centre to the next. Curation was frequently almost non-existent as was any attempt to extend the life of the collection items through application of controlled atmosphere or materials conservation treatment. Few maintained storage facilities and all items held, regardless of condition or duplication, were presented in minimally interpreted exhibitions.

While there was financial support available to the arts community generally for both capital development and for annual programs, local museums were specifically excluded from such assistance. Direct help was provided through the permanent loan of excess display furniture and this became a significant contribution when the Museum disposed of its complete compliment of furniture from its old building in 1986.

In 1982 the Board convinced the Government to introduce a granting scheme to assist local museums (that complied with the ICOM definition of a "museum") to improve museum services in their area of the State. Funding support has been at a relatively low level and does not capital works. Currently, support is restricted to a maximum of \$3000 in any year in response to a formal application and can only be applied towards non-recurring projects. Some funding can be provided towards building modifications where these are needed to ensure better protection for collections. Work to insulate a building or to reduce ultraviolet light values is acceptable but repairs to steps are not. Support for payment for professional planning or to permit attendance at conferences or work experience placement at the Queensland Museum or relevant tertiary institutions can be accommodated by the scheme.

Administration of the Grant Towards Local Museum Activities Scheme is undertaken by the Queensland Museum and technical advice is given freely to all local museums in the State. Funds currently reach more than 70 local museums each year and there has been an appreciable improvement in the quality of the ac-



tivities addressed by local museums since the scheme's inception. This has not only been because of the funding provided but also reflects the more regular contact with and advice from professional Queensland Museum staff. Further, community museums must now be incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act and this has meant that the previously loosely composed constitutions under which they operated have been considerably strengthened in favour of the long-term protection of collections held in the public interest.

Existence of Branches of the Queensland Museum in regional centres, presented as they are at the same standards as in Brisbane, has established a level that local museums must attempt to match. Certainly, there is an increasing tendency for local museums to identify what is unique or important in their areas and to present more specialised exhibitions that are increasingly more different from those in nearby centres. This in itself is bound to increase their viability in an ever more competitive field.

An attempt is being made by the Queensland Museum to locate important material back to the areas from which it was drawn. With financial support from Kelloggs, the Museum duplicated the mounted skeleton of the ornithischian dinosaur, *Muttaburrasaurus* and erected it in a display centre in Hughenden. Similar assistance has been offered to the Richmond Shire Council in regard to display of marine reptiles collected for that area of the State.

#### TRAINING REGIONAL PERSONNEL

In May, 1978, the Queensland Museum organised a weekend training seminar for local museums; it aimed to improve services by providing access for participants to a full range of professional and technical advice and expertise. This was supplemented by several specialist, practical training weekends on topics such as display planning and production. The Museum has consistently provided staff to participate in workshops organised by the Museums Association of Australia and more localised groupings of museums and like institutions.

At the same time, a number of small, existing museums and some seeking to establish themselves, sought and received approval to locate honorary staff in the Museum with a view to having them experience a range of training in curatorial and preparatorial techniques. In-house work experience is also offered to a number of

senior secondary students each year, together with tertiary students from museum studies courses around the country. International links have been established in the same way through acceptance of trainee workers for extended periods from Asian and Pacific nations, including Sarawak, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Niue and the Solomon Islands.

The most recent project in the area of museological training was to bring together a group of interested Aborigines from areas as far afield as Mt. Isa and Cairns. There has been a growing interest among the Aboriginal community in the development of cultural centres and the Museum felt that it would be of benefit to those who may ultimately be involved to have first hand experience of the range of skills needed to successfully plan and run specimen based services for community and tourist use.

#### SUPPLYING PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre recognised shortly after the opening that professional staff would be needed on site to oversee the collections, improve the information component of the initial displays and develop collection policies and collections from them. It was also recognised that, because of the isolation of the facility, any appointee would be severely disadvantaged regarding professional development and maintenance of standards. The Queensland Museum was approached to appoint a curatorial officer to the staff of the Museum for attachment to the Hall of Fame for two years. All costs associated with the appointment would be borne by the Hall of Fame and the officer would enjoy the same conditions of employment as Museum staff.

The Museum considered that the proposal mutually beneficial. The arrangement provided the opportunity for a much closer relationship than could otherwise be achieved with the Hall of Fame, as the largest of the community-run "museums" in the State. It also encouraged co-operative ventures, especially in the public program area. From the Hall of Fame's viewpoint, not only was a professionally linked officer present in Longreach but also, the Museum was available to oversee the Hall of Fame's collection documentation and development program and give expert advice on conservation and building modification needs.

Now in its second year, it is unlikely that this type of arrangement could be readily duplicated

by other local museums because of their restricted income bases.

### CONCLUSION

The Queensland Museum has progressively increased access to its services by as many of the residents of Queensland and visitors to the State as possible. While much remains to be done, the services now implemented are considered to address the problems of distance and decentralisation to an extent that is significantly greater than most other medium-sized museums within Australia and elsewhere. By establishing a philosophy that identified the rights of access by all of the residents of Queensland to the material

and information held in trust within the Museum, it has been possible to act both proactively and opportunistically to develop cost effective programs that continue to expand and that have high public acceptance.

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